

to hear that the remote invisible directing power of the whole thing had been "nationalised."

I once heard a man defend modern monopolies of this kind against the charge of destroying competition, by saying that there was still plenty of competition inside the big shop for particular posts and powers. In principle this can only be a competition in courting and flattering a master; and is therefore morally akin to a mere mob of oriental slaves, seeing who can bow lowest or run quickest. It is not competition as it can be between two farmers or two fishermen, which is the competition of fighters and free men. But there is another point about that apology which the apologist certainly failed to notice. In order to answer this criticism from the Distributive school, he had really surrendered his whole case against the Socialist school. For if this competition for posts, among the employees of one business, is all we require, there is no reason why a State department should not give us what we require. There is no reason why we should not all be content to compete inside one business; and that business the State. Even under State Socialism there would have to be different posts and probably different salaries; certainly different scales of expenses. In short, Big Business and Bolshevism are only rivals in the sense of making rival efforts to do the same thing; and they are more and more even doing it in the same way. I am not surprised that the cleverest men doing it in both cases are Jews. And this is not in the least because I dislike Jews; for everybody who knows me knows that I do not. It is because I know the Jews to be unfortunately cut off from one particular ideal; which is the only possible alternative ideal to their collectivist capitalism and their capitalist collectivism.

The Jew may be a philanthropist or a usurer; he may be a social reformer or a sweater; but nobody in his senses will say that he is primarily a peasant. Nobody in his senses will pretend that the Jew has particular sympathy with the pride and point of honour of the peasant. Now our alternative policy is an appeal, not indeed merely to a peasantry, but to those ideals they are the strength of a peasantry. Those ideals of independence are native to all western soils. They still hang about, like thunder in the mountains, in the echoes of a hundred songs about freedom. They still linger in all the legends about local patriots and the heroes of small nations. They have but one burden; that no man must accept luxury instead of liberty; and that poverty and thrift look down as from a throne on all that multitudinous humanity that bears the badge of the slave. I look out again on the beechwoods of this countryside; and I know that the yeoman spirit was as native to my country as to others, and that Robin Hood could bend a bow as well as William Tell. But I know that to adopt this alternative ideal in England is truly to be a revolutionist; in a real sense in which no man is a revolutionist when he is merely a Bolshevik. That sort of Robin Hood will indeed be an outlaw, and will be charged only with drawing the long bow. He is doing the one thing that is really thought eccentric; he is aiming at the centre, at the shining centre of the target.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

It is very important at this moment that responsible writers and speakers in England should grasp the effect of the loss of Constantinople. No newspaper that I know of published in this country has dealt with the matter so that any reader could understand what was being said. We have had plenty of abuse of the politician who last occupied the nominal post of Prime Minister and plenty of laughter at the politician who for the moment occupies the same nominal post, and no doubt to-morrow the game will go on with whatever other politician worms himself into, or is jockeyed into, or is nominated by the real governors

of the country into, that much-advertised and formerly important post. But what we have not had is a plain statement of the position which would tell the English people what has happened. The first steps of the business I have set down in these columns as clearly as possible. What is happening now—the development of the original disaster—is a continued series of accumulating further peril for this country. It is absolutely essential that those at least who write in the public press should understand what the situation is. For though they have to write what they are told by their employers, the ignorance of their employers is such that, if they, the writers, are instructed they will have some chance, not indeed of saving the situation, but of preventing its worst consequences. The educated men on the press have to say what they are told by their strange millionaire masters, but if they understand the full character of the national danger they will have some power of reacting upon the people who employ them and of getting the truth told.

What is happening now, mainly through the incredible puerility of what is called "politics" in this country is the destruction of the English position in Islam. Meanwhile, of course, the French are taking the fullest advantage of such a state of affairs. But the French influence, which grows greater day by day, is not due to any wonderful subtlety on the part of the French parliamentarians, who are of exactly the same kidney as our own; it is only a reaction following upon the errors committed here, in London, during the last few years. It is not a case of the French forcing themselves into a position which they are occupying against the will of the English Government. It is a case of the French naturally dropping into a position which the ignorance, folly, carelessness and corruption of men like George, Law, and the rest at Westminster, have left open for them to occupy.

At the present moment the main particular test of a sound foreign policy is Islam. Apart from the general and obvious test of understanding the world as it is, of knowing that American interests are not English interests, that the Colonies have no great military power, that a fleet does not mean what it did in 1913, that our rulers have broken the framework on which we might have raised a large army rapidly, that we have no power of making our indignant, ruined and angry mass of wage-earners fight for things which they have never had explained to them, and could not take an interest in—apart from this understanding of general truths, the particular test, I say, is the test of Islam. That one of the Western Governments which best understands Islam has the future in its hands.

Men who say this are much blamed. I receive indignant letters blaming my own humble self for insisting in these humble columns upon so paramount, immediate and (if I may use the word) apocalyptic a truth. It would be well if I could state it in columns much more widely read. Happily these are read sufficiently among writers upon the press. But whether they are read or no, the truth must be stated in them because it cannot be stated anywhere else.

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There is no time to debate at this moment, the respective moral value of Islam and Christendom. Islam, starting as a heresy from Christendom, has formed its own vast civilisation, Christendom has been half-ruined spiritually by its own splendid energy, reacting on itself and giving us the Protestant schism (with all its later developments of Mormonism, Prussianism, Teetotalism, and the rest) and by the atheist, or sceptical, vision which drove right into the remaining Catholic civilisation two hundred years ago, and is only now declining.

Volumes could be written to show how inferior to Christendom Islam has proved, and how Christendom is necessarily the antagonist of Islam. It is an obvious historical truth.